



## Researching in German Archives

Heidi G. Sugden, AG®

### SEE WHAT RECORDS ARE AVAILABLE IN THE UNITED STATES BEFORE GOING TO GERMANY

**Do all the research you can before you go to Germany:**

- **FamilySearch** consult the Catalog for microfilms or online records.
- **Ancestry.com** (Ancestry.de.com) has many German records online.
- **Matricula** has the diocese of Passau, Hildesheim, Magdeburg, Münster and the State Archive of Breslau online.
- **ARCHION** has put 11 different German Lutheran Archives online (paid website)
- **Ortsfamilienbücher (Online heritage books)** (<http://ofb.genealogy.net/>)
- Kevan M. Hansen: **MAP GUIDE TO GERMAN PARISH REGISTERS** (helpful to determine the surrounding parishes.)

### USEFUL WEBSITES:

[www.meyersgaz.org](http://www.meyersgaz.org) Online Meyers Gazetteer

[www.archion.de](http://www.archion.de) German Lutheran Records online (Check to see if your records are online.)

[www.data.matricula.info](http://www.data.matricula.info) Diocese of Passau, Archive of Breslau (Wroclaw).

[www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org).Wiki: Germany Archives and Libraries.

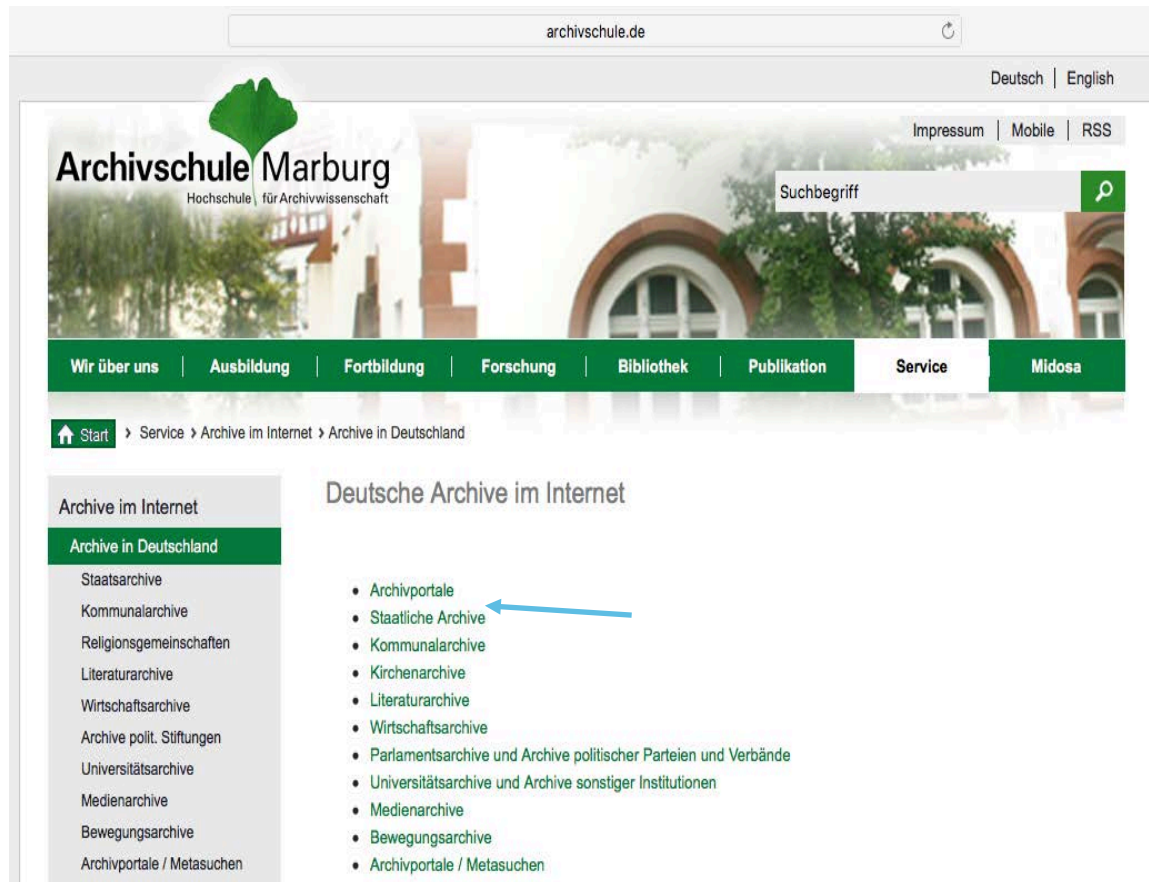
[www.genealogy.net](http://www.genealogy.net) Archives in Germany, great source for contact information, and archive holdings.

### HOW TO FIND THE RIGHT ARCHIVES

Each archive is assigned a certain area, the Archivsprengel. Details are usually found on the archive website or in published descriptions. Records for one locality may be found in several archives, because the jurisdictions may have changed repeatedly.

On the website of the Archivschule (archive school) in Marburg you can find a link to many of the German Archives.

<http://archivschule.de/DE/service/archive-im-internet>



Click on Archivportale (archive portals) for a listing of all major German archives:

### **Regionale Archivportale**

- Archive in Baden-Württemberg
- Archive in Bayern
- Archive in Berlin
- Archive in Hessen
- Archive in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern
- Archivportal Niedersachsen
- Kommunalarchive in Niedersachsen
- Archive in Nordrhein-Westfalen
- Archive in Rheinland-Pfalz
- Archive im Saarland
- Archive in Schleswig Holstein
- Archive in Thüringen

## PRINTED ARCHIVE RESOURCES

There are many books available with Archive Sources, below are listed just a few:

- **Ancestors in German Archives**, Raymond S. Wright III, Nathan S. Rives, Mirjam J. Kirkham, Saskia Schier Bunting, FHL 943 J54w 2004
- **Researching in Germany: a handbook for your visit to the homeland of your ancestors.** Roger P. Minert, Roger Philipp, Riemer, Shirley J., Sirrine, Susan E. Jennifer A. Anderson, FHL Int. 940 D27mr 2013
- **Archive in Deutschland, Österreich und der Schweiz, ein Adressenverzeichnis**, Ardey Verlag, Verband deutscher Archivarinnen und Archivare, FHL Intl. 943 J54ai, 2006 (online in the FHL)

## ONLINE ARCHIVE RESOURCES

- **German Records Inventory (FHL source only); ask a German Consultant**
- **FamilySearch Wiki: German Archives and Libraries**
- **GenWiki - Kategorie: Archive in Deutschland** ([www.genealogienetz.de](http://www.genealogienetz.de))
- **Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland**  
([http://wiki-de.genealogy.net/Evangelische\\_Kirche\\_in\\_Deutschland](http://wiki-de.genealogy.net/Evangelische_Kirche_in_Deutschland))
- **Kategorie: Bistumsarchiv in Deutschland**  
([http://wiki-de.genealogy.net/Kategorie:Bistumsarchiv\\_in\\_Deutschland](http://wiki-de.genealogy.net/Kategorie:Bistumsarchiv_in_Deutschland))
- **German Archives**  
(<http://www.ghi-dc.org/publications/ghipubs/rg/rg013/germarch.html>)
- **Archives in Germany**  
(<http://home.bawue.de/~hanacek/info/earchive.htm>) Alfred Hanacek
- **Ahnenforschung**  
(<http://ahnenforschungen.de/genlink/Archive/Kirchenarchive/index.shtml>)
- **Wikipedia Archivportal**  
(<http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archivportal>)

## HELPFUL HINTS FOR USING GERMAN ARCHIVES EFFECTIVELY

- **Appointment:** Make an appointment as far ahead as possible. Seats/equipment for researchers are limited. Check in the holdings of the Archive to make sure the records you want are in the ArchiveS. You may need to order

records in advance of your visit, this can be done by e-mail. Save the response from the Archives and take it with you when you come.

- **Hours open:** Archives may not be open every day. Be aware of vacation times and holidays. In Germany there are many more holidays than in the United States, especially in Catholic areas. Check the archive website for up-to-date information, and ask where to park if you are driving.
- **Punctual:** Be there a little before the archives open, you will get a better place and meet other researchers.
- **Help:** **Do not expect research/reading help.** Archive users are expected to be able to read the Gothic script and find their way around the records. In larger archives the archivists generally do not work with the public. The front desk is staffed by office personnel who can usually guide the user to appropriate record finding tools, but often cannot read the records.
- **Rules:** Become familiar with the rules that govern access to and use of the records in each archive. Generally, if records have been microfilmed, the originals are no longer accessible. There may be a limit to the number of books/films you can request in one day. Have your ID with you to fill out the user-information request; some archives will make a photocopy of your passport or write down the ID number.
- **Numbers:** When filling out record requests with call numbers, be aware of the German numbers “1” and “7”. Try writing them the German way, so that you will get the correct material.
- **Copies:** Be prepared to pay for daily user fees and copies in **cash**. Most archives will make copies, but they may need to be sent to you. Fees vary. Some copy the entire page, some only the needed entry. **Most larger archives do NOT allow digital photography.**
- **Lunch break:** Some archives require everyone to leave during the lunch break, especially the Catholic ones.
- **Pencils:** Some archives require the use of pencils only; some allow laptops, so bring plenty of paper and pencils to copy the information you find.

## ARCHIVE VOCABULARY

Akte - records  
Amt – office  
Anmeldung – registration  
Arbeitsplatz – workplace  
Archivalien – archival records  
Archivportal – archive portal  
Band - volume  
Beitrag (-äge) article(s)  
Benutzersaal – user's hall  
Benutzung – use  
Bestand (-ände) – inventory  
Bezeichnung – designation  
Bistum – diocese  
Bistumsarchiv – diocese archives  
Bundesland – state  
Datenbank – database  
Dekanat – deanery  
Diözesanarchiv – diocese archives  
Ergänzung – supplement  
Erzbistum – Archdiocese  
Evangelische Kirche – Evangelical Church  
Faszikel - volume  
Findmittel – finding aid  
Handbuch – manual  
Hauptstaatsarchiv – Central State Archive  
Hinweis – hint

Inhaltsverzeichnis – content  
Katholische Kirche – Catholic Church  
Kirchenbuch (-bücher) – church book  
Kirchenbuchverzeichnis – church book directory  
Kreisarchiv – County Archive  
Kreisfreie Stadt – Independent town  
Landesarchiv – National Archive  
Landeshauptarchiv – Central National Archive  
Landeskirche – State Archive  
Landkreis – County  
Lesesaal – reading room  
Matrikel – records  
Namensregister – name index  
Öffnungszeiten – opening hours  
Ortsindex – location index  
Ortsname – place name  
Pfarrmatrikel – parish records  
Recherche – research  
Regierungsbezirk – administrative area  
Repertorium – listing of records, holdings  
Reservierung - reservation  
Sammlungen – collections  
Staatsarchiv – state archive  
Suchabfrage – search  
Veröffentlichungen – publications  
Verzeichnis – catalogue